particulars

Tom Corrado

again, for you . . .

Do thou stand for my father, and examine me
upon the particulars of my life.
- William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I, Act II, Scene 4*

Begin anywhere - John Cage

You're not sure it's a question
and you're trying to convince yourself
that you couldn't care less
but you know that you do . . .
You know that lately it's been a rabbit hole
and that in the dream you drilled down
to your old neighborhood
now in disrepair
and confided to your friend who died
of a heart attack on the tennis court
30 years ago at 39 . . .
Your afterimage brought you to your knees
and has been texting you incessantly . . .
You've said you want out . . .
So you put aside the question in question,
and think again
about Alice, in disguise, in your dream,
wearing one of those huge hats
in the manner of the Red Queen
and carrying on about why words
can be made to mean
so many different things
which again opens the door
to the conundrum
waiting for you in the fun house mirror . . .
You passed the rigor of bicycle days,
coaster brakes waiting behind package stores,
if's, ands, buts triangulating the derivatives
barely visible through the brushstrokes,
armatures buckling under symbols shape-shifting
with wait staff, your chalk drawn and ready . . .
The mathematicians of your half-life
are talking their way
through the axioms on Knife's Edge
the conjectures at Herring Cove
the theorems along the Hudson
hustling you past
the rentals, the SROs, condos, two-families,

the faces in the windows of doublewides
reflecting the ambiguity of your words . . .
Your rewrite fills an amphitheater with iterations
of the same person . . . a stranger . . .
You were told this would happen, yes? . . .
Words bottleneck the coastal route:
you know, the windup, the pitch, the corner
the cab to the outer reaches
the Nile rerouted
gondoliers on holiday . . .
Oblong days saturate polyrhythms . . .
Back seat drivers GPSing . . .
The muses step up to the plate . . .
Did you fail to deliver? . . .
Did you fail to hand in the report on time? . . .
You will not pass Go . . .
You will not collect $200 . . .
You will be banished to a Draft Folder
in the Outer Banks
to sit there, in a quandary, bemoaning a foothold . . .
You fall asleep watching *Scenes from a Marriage*
(for the umpteenth time)
and awaken to a brighter palette:
the confluence of material, brushstroke, support, scale
how music can jack the spirit
the change in your pocket jingling with memories
the exchange of emails shepherding new worlds . . .
Running on the fumes of texts excites . . .
This time you have read the manual
studied the expressions on their faces
reviewed your notes, practiced survival skills
as suggested by counter staff
at Dunkin' and Starbucks . . .
They too are familiar with the sketches you shared
and seem to understand your reasons
for trying to get it all down . . .
Your eyeliner tells a different story . . .
Cartons upon cartons upon cartons
delivered in a misrepresentation of facts . . .
And where in this stream of consciousness

do you place yourself?...
There's no telling when you too will be dropped ...
Waiting for ... Waiting for ...
Insinuations jumping out of the woodwork
without regard for the other players
in this mini-drama
which streams Saturday evening somewhere ...
Come out with it, already ...
You know you're bursting with others ...
The excavations bronzed ...
Your thoughts bronzed ...
The heat-stroked field always a good excuse ...
Undaunted, the U-Haul speaks volumes ...
Have you been here before?...
Your appearance bodes well
for the extended forecast ...
Were there enough corrugations
to keep the pachyderms occupied for the duration?...
The shore can be therapeutic, yes?...
Especially the white sand ...
It's not just that though ...
There's something else, something
I can't put my finger on ...
This has been happening a lot lately,
and I fear it may become par for the course ...
Bette Davis was one; there have been others
but she nailed it, and it's stood ...
Did you think
you could forestall the inevitable?...
You sleep with jealousy and run red lights
bronzing conjugations of fornicate
trying to pump the impression
of laughing through intersections ...
Scribbles aside you paddle to the middle
and sketch the shoreline ...
The sun sits between timeouts ...
It's all about staying the moment
finding a script with starting blocks tailor-made
then moving online for subtleties ...
You got rid of most of it at the transfer station ...

But some things are difficult to part with, yes?...
Sticking to your fingertips
when a storm approaches, for example ...
Seeing them in your rearview mirror ...
And now, they're dancing on the roof
the angle making it impossible for you to let go ...
You engage a semicolon and chalk up another lap
trying to snag a moment of immortality
with ospreys on the breakers
at the tip of the Cape ...
a perfect day ... a perfect costume ...
your younger self trying to elbow in
but you surprise the nosebleed section
with a crossover dribble
and set the stage
for another take on
Long Day's Journey Into Night
conceived in one of the dune shacks
you visited followed by high tide
and an arpeggiated welcome
by the piano player at *The Moors*
who upon seeing you announced ... shipwreck! ...
You envision a write-up or a white-out
but words are slow
which is OK because odysseyites on holiday
are standing down
waiting for the call to exercise
their right to farm
with its green light ignoring nuisance lawsuits ...
You're at loggerheads
deconstructing time and loving it ...
so why shouldn't the exasperated
in the green room pay homage to last month's winners
in the Pick Up Stix Contest
touting fast casual Asian cuisine?...
Your basement tapes voice allegations
of foreplay and aftplay
in the cemetery miniseries
that didn't make the cut ...
Yes, the hills are alive ...

But, hey, let's not forget there's more to it . . .
A conductor with baton raised
ready to start time
opens the throttle
to begin the first movement . . .
the clocks change
and the bottleneck at the back door
is shortlisted in the *Times*
with someone soloing
as a prelude to the sarabande
that everyone has been waiting to hear . . .
You tell me about the pleasures
of your special house
the color-coded, numbered steps
the nested rooms
the welcoming gestures
the shoutout Beethovenish . . .
A semblance of your former self
searches scores for an earwormed progression
that holds the clock's breath
with you keyboarding in real time . . .
You open with a chase scene
awaiting the first snowfall . . .
A dream of a dream of a dream, yes? . . .
You displayed inscrutable dexterities
in the moment and thereafter . . .
isolating the ambience for later study . . .
dating entries as a method
of keeping track of where you left off . . .
There was little sense in doing the math . . .
Enough came too soon . . . the pleasure
climbing but falling off before peaking
as incomplete as the scribbled code
bobbing in the runoff . . .
Your experience with choral groups
seemed endlessly renewable
endlessly enjoyable
as rare as colorways in bipolarity . . .
Your attempt to encounter afresh
the waveform action of syntax

led to a diatribe of dead ends
directing you to return to the streets
marked *One Way* with all the trappings
of cutting, splitting, and stacking wood
impressing the making and unmaking of sense,
the *how* not the *what* of knowing . . .
It was time . . . but time for what? . . .
There are too many times
and the clock is no help . . .
You don't know what to do . . .
You fill with indecision . . .
A keyboardist taps for a return to Wordstar . . .
You find yourself waiting in a waiting line . . .
You decide to throw caution to the wind
and go food shopping . . .
The aisles speak to you in foreign tongues . . .
You feel alien . . .
Free samples are thrust upon you . . .
You begin reciting aloud a monologue
you thought you had forgotten
but then it popped into your head
just now in the condiment aisle . . .
a monologue from your faux halcyon days
when you looked forward
to nights of how-tos and what-if's
in storefronts stuffed with tchotchkes
piled high by functioning hoarders . . .
You love the pig mug
and the designer toilet paper . . .
There's more but it won't let go
of the tip of your tongue . . .
Shoppers stare at you . . . aim their iPhones at you . . .
The supermarket begins to close in on you . . .
an experience reminiscent of your time served
in boostered state office cubicles . . .
You press the Escape key . . .
You're using a random text generator
to fill in memory gaps . . .
How back from elsewhere in blue suede shoes
you loitered to grab caffeine

with a camera obscurist lost in plate tectonics . . .
Misplacing the memo
you practiced night sweats
with a minor leaguer
who had to follow an instruction sheet
for stonermasons . . .
Fast forwarding 40 years you find yourself
among the original cast members
bloating come-ons for moving-up day
in a city of somnambulists . . .
The sky cloudless (which here means nothing) . . .
Memorable hamlets . . . and ink . . .
quid-pro-quo under the skin of a woolly mammoth
mooring across a Russian novel
with a grandmother inviting you in
for *voodka* and borscht . . .
Your high heels catch-as-catch-can . . .
your hemming and hawing
make it into the finals
with a jump shot paradigm shift
while sniggling softly in tantric rapture . . .
The day quibbles intensity
climbing in a hot air balloon . . . belching symbols . . .
the same 32 symbols with few exceptions
scribbled by ancients on cave walls . . .
Your visions incubate playoffs
as odysseyites seek shelter
from misappropriations . . .
A free ride with Thanksgiving looms . . .
There is something about something, but . . .
the dumplings, ah, yes, the dumplings
continue to steam . . .
You return remarkably from your incision
into hubris which unchecked
could forego Chromebook's immensity . . .
Blueness strolls elsewhere
while a disaffected second assistant director
toggles a capacity
for resilience against despair . . .
He too will . . . eventually . . .

Rinsing your mouth after using a puffer
impresses a starlet
known for her brake pad bails . . .
You're onstage translating blue book innuendos . . .
Graffiti artists recruit Zamboni drivers
for the latest in homespun contortions . . .
Every day you write down a color for emphasis . . .
It sometimes works . . .
especially with underdeveloped photographs
and smokeless candles
from *Bed Bath and Beyond . . .*
You admit to appropriating yourself . . .
About the dog's dutiful permanence
within the purview of the cat's tall tail
wedded to your spot-on translations
you reluctantly relinquish reserve . . .
The day is recalled for safety violations . . .
Knowing full well desire's amplitude
fuels your compassion
for one-armed bandits with performance anxiety . . .
Long haulers reconfigure goodbyes . . .
There is no other life . . .
Promises are scanned . . . some shredded . . .
Irrevocability is tabled . . .
The difference jolts you awake
in the middle of your soliloquy
filled with hounds
nipping at the darkness . . .
Your lines recall with impunity
late night walks through scripts
costumed in OCD . . .
baiting your next subject . . .
reporting the outcome to the moms and pops
infiltrating the neighborhood
after word got out
that the sidewalks are paved
with deleted TikToks . . .
The world fills with dubious auditionees . . .
You do your best to weather a strange ineptitude
the discoloration of the senses

that follows a fragmented conversation
but before you know it
a triviality arrives
with its own list of demands . . .
Later, several strangely-costumed leads
appear seemingly on cue from installations
and reappear one by one
as if in an infinite loop
offering monologues and soliloquies
odds and check-out times
well-wrought and well-received
thorough in their encryption
yet lacking in payback . . .
while outside an out-of-sorts vehicle
makes its way along the narrow one-way street
depositing memories
on one chipped stoop after another . . .
Maybe they're coded into the graphic versions
of Stephen Hawking's *Time*
hawked by junkyard dogs and other ne'er-do-wells . . .
Or Proust? . . . maybe Proust? . . .
Regardless, time passes . . .
Fashion plates spin . . .
Turntablists go on record to transfuse vinyl . . .
Anything to keep out of hock . . .
Anything to stave off the due date . . .
The life of a court jester juggling, what,
five, six, seven balls
in the days of bungee jumps
accelerates the metabolism
sets loose change jingling
pockets fluttering with delight . . .
This is good, yes? . . .
Dishpan dilemmas melt away . . .
You wake in a Beckettian diorama
locks unchanged, doors ajar
showcasing reticence, ambiguity, and
humorous deflationary counterpoint . . .
Who said that? . . . Did you say that? . . .
Dusty volumes doze on podiums,

awaiting magic fingers . . .
Everyone is in fine fettle . . .
And after? . . . Who knows? . . .
At the very least you'll be penciled in
somewhere ages and ages hence . . .
Images of your former self fill the air
with commiserations . . .
Videos spiral into collages of departure
and go viral . . . assembling words to say something
about something you know something about
but then stop . . . This happens, yes? . . .
It's as if you were told about the last time . . .
It's as if you were told this will be the last time . . .
It's as if you were told this is the last time . . .
Imagining the confusion when the code bombs
and regs are swapped out for neologisms . . .
You have tried to set the record straight . . .
There will be no setting the record straight . . .
Who told you you would be able
to set the record straight? . . .
The record is gone . . . last seen entering Hannaford . . .
You have tried to pick up where you left off . . .
Just where did you leave off? . . .
Too much information . . .
You have submitted the paperwork,
and rejoined your age-mates
who pump air and will continue to pump air
into the silence of anechoic chambers . . .
It's as if you were glued to YouTube . . .
It's as if you knew all along you would be muted . . .
It's as if you were recognized for who you are . . .
Hence, your fascination with sleep
and with Proust's *Questionnaire*
alluded to in the opening scene . . .
This, of course, made to seem inconsequential . . .
Alone now in the wilderness
in a blizzard . . .
OK, a good start . . .
Tweak it a bit to fit
into the Islets of Langerhans . . .

That can't be right . . .
Nonetheless, continue . . .
Act Two is much the same
prompting your comment on the formulaic . . .
The cluster fills with posers . . .
That it works is insidious, I mean, incredulous . . .
Are you sure you want to proceed? . . .
If you do, you'll have to walk us through
the proof specking falsehoods within
a narrow margin of error . . .
Think an endangered Snow Leopard
in one of the most remote areas on earth . . .
You are with yourself
you are within yourself
not unlike the unnamed monster
in Mary Shelley's novel
with Victor Frankenstein near death
on an ice floe relating his terror
to explorer Robert Walton . . .
this excursion into horror
by an 18-year-old's nightmare
two years after she became pregnant
with her first child, also unnamed . . .
The monster like all seeks love and recognition
but suffers misunderstanding, rejection, hatred . . .
Enter TikTok:
a life out of balance scored by Philip Glass
whose teacher Nadia Boulanger
arguably the greatest music teacher of all time
fueled his one-upmanship
with fellow composer Steve Reich . . .
and so the world as House of Crazy
forcing us to dip our quills
into rose-colored liquid
to palatabalize
appropriating a one-way ticket to elsewhere . . .
Odysseyites curry favor with Johnny-come-latelies
homeless in email . . . palming handouts
and a free pass to the *Lone Star Steakhouse*
where buy-ones get-ones feature . . .

A Shakespearean interface perplexes you far and away
your memory skewed by the cacophony
of the signal-to-noise ratio
filling the first movement
with incomprehensible snow . . .
You have come to appreciate nautical wherewithals
and manage to navigate the second movement
mindful of the snow whose melodic drifts
you later learn was what everyone
had slogged through the snowstorm to hear . . .
Seasonal hymns carry you aloft
the small print assuring you that the exaltation
in the fuzziness of the rearview mirror
is evidence of your coming-of-age . . .
Reams of prayer repurpose happiness
on the street where you live
and alter the topography of your brain . . .
You day-trip backstory practice
mimicking the chamber group
in *Pictures at an Exhibition . . .*
the momentum enough
to spearhead you into the beyond . . .
Isn't it magical? . . . intimacy's joggle? . . .
The candles flickering their excitement . . .
puzzling amusement . . . dynamic
in their medievalism . . . in their ability
to quell supermarket stalkers
comparing notes on extended techniques
with odysseyites dabbling in noise . . .
The snow is indeed over the top
but, look, the wonderment of this winter wonderland
is a dotted line to the divine
prompting players to sort through their collections
of unfinished symphonies
sorted on imaginary number . . .
Voices from the air elbow in with the insistence
of Crayolas pocketed from the early days
when naïveté colored your renderings
with eyes wide shut
dumbing down the circumstances . . .

A breeze through an open window
with images of past lives
swells thought bubbles into the full catastrophe . . .
You as confused as I . . .
Yes, add that to your write-up . . .
Many were inexperienced . . . time and again
misinterpreting hand-holding as condescension
revisiting the cul-de-sac with the passcode
at the wheel of your nightmare . . .
So you would proceed . . . slowly . . .
encouraging them to ask questions . . . take notes . . .
The strangeness of the encounter . . . a given . . .
both of you stepping out of your comfort zones
as if shooting with a green screen . . .
And what about postproduction at the tea shop
with work-a-day costumes
oozing hilarity in retrospect? . . .
A dropdown menu of grayed-out options
is about to announce your seeming willingness
to engage theater as theater . . .
After all, it's all theater, yes? . . .
Even the garnish on your takeout . . .
So how about a share-plate of edibles
selected with care
by your favorite chef-de-cuisine-du-jour? . . .
enough to dampen the gratuitous hostility
of your joystick
with the rag-dolled strangers backstage
urging hardtail fat bikes
down gravel paths with night moves
going meta . . . stretching like taffy
along the yellow brick road of imagination . . .
Everyone memorialized in the softcovers
cluttering your backroom
is a person of disinterest
kneejerking golden rings in fables
transcribing the blank pages of the novel
you inhabit . . . while you reach
for your autofiction trying to forget
what you saw, who you are,

fashioning orphaned marionettes to retreat
into the theme parks of your fragmented mind ...
You're dicking around with comma splices
trying to flesh out the ambiguity of appositives
checking prices of navel oranges and fuel oil ...
The books on the shelf in fracture mode
stare you down, threaten to open ...
There's a diagrammable certainty to all this
but you're having trouble putting your finger on it ...
It's just so intricate and deliberate ...
like winter's grip ...
Traffic at the tray feeders jams
dislodging with a bright palette
the ennui of second-growth trees ...
This could be about me, you, or someone else ...
This hodgepodge of injecting meaning into the day ...
the value of your words plummeting
given the seeming insouciance of event parking ...
The relapse is about to relapse
with its refusal to countenance
any change in policy governing rules of grammar ...
No doubt we'll hear more about this ...
The instability that looms ...
like arriving at insight through revision
so you keep rethinking the path
and it turns out to be illuminating
even when you feel on the brink
or fear going over the edge
the stick-to-ittiveness ...
Sorting through old photographs
your past lives ... your past choices ...
the anything as everything
regrets at the last station
doubts ... insinuations ...
ghosts recapping playthroughs
dance across rooftops ...
How often have you been slammed with less
despite costume changes promising more? ...
despite the correct passcode? ...
I know you know this from past table reads ...

A diorama shadows your blue-penciled autofiction ...
The day wanders through snowflake-dotted buildings
leaning against one another
as if the whole world is about to entropy ...
You enter a wormhole
parlaying archival footage
for an afterlife with benefits ...
the deck stacked with thumbnail sketches
of odysseyites seduced by Sirens of Dissonance ...
The eons avalanche ...
there are so many you've lost track ...
A downsized news anchor holed-up for days in her room
bangs out magic on an ancient ribbonless Remington
over and over and over ...
You favor transmutations ... real and imagined ...
passersby cosplay odysseyites
follow dotted lines
the consciousness of overcast days
delivering overcast shadows
acknowledging overcast notations
as if in the tunnel of unread words
appearing again and again in dreams
of morning shows throughout ...
You try to recall days when in the middle of nothing
you were handed a different script
a different unfinished script
winging it with nothing more
than semiotic regurgitations
connecting the dots to an overgrown apple orchard
from someone's childhood secrets ...
the one your friend let go
when his parents disappeared ...
The knack of going back intimidates you ...
as if riding through storm clouds of white chickens
on a red wheelbarrow ... overly-anthologized
beyond recognition ...
Of course one could ask, What options? ...
Imposing complexity on a single piece of prose
as if the flat darkness
demands a gathering of sorts ...

You are now here . . . on your way there . . .
The permutations of if drone on
debulking the synthesizers and spandex
of a second Stone Age
at times engaging the rhapsodic
with a view from within . . .
risking enormity with its attendant salads and sadness
yellowed pages of indecipherable scribbles
appear late at night at the foot of your bed . . .
You hop into bed with happenstance . . .
scenes of endearment in black and white
on a doilied Stromberg-Carlson
in a room reminiscent of Miss Havisham's
crammed with memories of home-schoolers . . .
The boulevards distract with light reading . . .
odysseyites await first dibs
their landing craft reassembled
with the same worn colored pencils
from a gallerist's backroom . . .
Renderings . . . mounted in amber
slip past the watchers at the gate
satisfy the elements of someone's style . . .
You google factorials
applying exclamation points
to escape to the garden . . .
head filled with Mahler's doom-laden *Ninth*
its twenty-seven bars for strings . . .
transcendent . . . a prototypical specter
redacts your clang associations . . .
Out among the stars testing your balance
swaying, cheating . . . the cut-to-the-bone precision
of the crow's flight . . . Icarus in the cockpit . . .
you practice a disciplined indifference
trying hard to seem not to be trying too hard
plagiarizing Seduction Theory
eyes on angularities
racking up odysseyites for a casual game of nine-ball
in the diamond formation on the subway
where it's all tag-team fashion show
for the clock's hand-wringing . . .

Trying to stay awake amid the blizzard of YouTubes
you reach back for the metric of then ...
bundles of literary allusions
misquoted misspelled misplaced
in the rare book section of the museum ...
spending nights alone in a dark room
teaching yourself to draw as if blindfolded ...
learning to unlearn ...
the fascination when the game is afoot ...
You leave the gallery and long-limbed bronzes
with gaps for reconciliation
by people filing in ... as what? ...
let's call them inadvertents ...
visiting the exhibition retrospectively,
following Zoomed corridors
through an opening in the text
and into the next scene
with customers at the counter in a diner
rewritten while obsessing the commonplace
with thoughts of odysseyites
going round and round the roundabout
in your old neighborhood
resonating with the rhythmic beat
of a blacksmith's hammer on an anvil
shaping steel red-hot from the fire
as if it were planned ...
as if it were the answer to the blue question
glued to the ATM ... empty, unused
on a one-way street
informing each and every touch of the day ...
You recount how touch initiates the sense of *I* ...
how it costumes the body on misty mornings
and waits at the bus stop
for passengers to resume their lives ...
A test email breaks the silence ...
The number of people
passing through the portal increases ...
And so it begins ... parsing the engagement
with you in the soup aisle at the supermarket
swiping your phone for texts,

checking the message
you took great care to get just right,
elbowing through inundations
within the wearisome, spinning orb,
harvesting the future for meaning
while standing at the edge of a cliff
for however long . . .
You're grappling so as not to forget
what you want to remember . . . a whoosh
as if the surf crashes the cliff
with you floating above . . .
You have decided to practice narrowing your focus
to eliminate the superfluous from your walks . . .
the day, deftly unraveling,
seems almost to disappear . . . so many thoughts
vying for your attention . . .
then this idea of the texture of it all . . .
everything everyone seemingly connected
with tabs for those nestled
in the cleft of your memory . . .
Again, asking yourself in the mirror
What good would questions do?. . .
the silence between extremes
leaving the madness of March
with index finger pointing to ring finger . . .
You buy time . . . walking through replays
that slam dunk you awake
in the middle of yet another dream
of being called out for texting plagiarisms . . .
You're thinking of taking the day off . . .
wanting to call in sick
when sick has nothing to do with it . . .
besides there's no one to call in to . . .
You should know this by now . . .
You should know that the gallerist
reviewing your work has run out of excuses
trying to make something to find out
what it means to make something . . .
An afternoon class in Classics
changes the way you approach texts

while the gravel trail bloats
big cats on fat bikes
waiting to find out what it all means
beginning with *Shall we begin?*
as we begin Frances O'Connor's *Emily*
with more isms to latch onto
sprung from the sibs' paracosms
to embellish the autofictions of those
in the boarded-up storefronts of no-no
disputing the biopic tag
with sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll
and a downplay of collaboration
ignoring Emily's diary paper . . .
And behind the embellishments
The facts in the case of . . .
You walk the walk for more words
using the *Index of First Lines*
to guide googling
only to return
cache full of purple waywardisms
as if you had trod the moors . . .
Then on to the myth, hands in pockets
parlaying passcodes at transfer stations
to level the playing field
for odysseyites bused to the soundstage . . .
But there was more to it than the translation
skirting the main event
while asking the resident Sphinx
the passcode to some inner chamber
where alternatives are kept on ice with Facebookers
posting the past despite the plethora
of contemporary adaptations
of your take on *Beowulf . . .*
those damaged destined to repeat their obsessions
tumbling head over heels into roundabouts . . .
A treatise on the importance
of getting your house in order
targets hoarders making the mess messier . . .
This longing for one last shot at immortality . . .
a day in the life of a day in the life . . .

everything volumizing a high wire act
with no less than how to get through the day . . .
The vigilance you signed up for, yes? . . .
Can you imagine this ancient hatch? . . .
This escapade of hopscotch fueling the voices in the air
that today argue happenstance . . .
the lone and level sands
stretching to a wooden-legged captain
awaiting a white whale? . . .
Nonsense lapses into feigned forgetfulness
dumping you in the middle of nowhere . . .
second guesses segue to pastoral settings
upstate with stemmed glass bumped
to the edge of tomorrow as Georgian models
infiltrate your REM sleep . . .
There's a history, of course, going back to the City
where who knows what happened . . .
the loss temporary . . . weighing the pluses and minuses
of your next move . . . memories of tagalongs
bloating the escape route . . . conflating the statistics
while all along, in the cards, the Shirelles
with Number One on *Billboard's Top 100 Chart*
for 1960: *Will You Love Me Tomorrow? . . .*
Irrevocability pins you to the mat
to wrangle seconds . . . or thirds . . .
as if messaging with footnotes
a sarabande by Yo-Yo Ma . . .
Why bother sweating the opening bars
with the prelude bleeding through the score
inflicted by a little-known? . . .
You're regressing faster than the speed of sound
to when you auditioned for intimacy's promises
and were thrown for an infinite loop
by odysseyites reopening the book
to the chapter you slammed shut . . .
A well-known misstep, yes? . . .
Losing your place in line at a tag team lawn party
the moment-to-moment gazes
the moment-to-moment costumes . . .
The iffyness . . . especially the embellishments

highlighting the timetable of your life . . .
where you are . . . and why . . .
The accumulation of happenstance . . . scripted . . .
does little to quell the offhandedness . . .
The offhanded notations of old money . . .
of old and new money . . .
Consulting a flowchart for next steps . . .
But is it enough? . . .
A long hauler paging through the elements
and with that, the scene shifts,
summoning a fact-checker
to fact-check the epigraph on tippy-toes
when all seemed taken by the virtual bridge
you had conjured the morning after . . .
Where were you on the night in question?
You seem never to tire of that . . .
Approaching it as if this is it
as if this time is it
as if toggling the options . . .
The events in the just-released transcript
by the just-released
who had long been forgotten by most . . .
But that was long ago
to say nothing of your selfish devotion to your art . . .
And then this happened
with the weird-ass energy of the woebegone
and you bejeweled with scrimshaws
sitting among the antique furniture in the atelier
blue-penciling diatribes . . .
Was there no other way? . . .
What was that anyway? . . .
The dynamics of engagement, perhaps? . . .
The regrettable choices? . . .
The nomenclature of streaming seems to have caught on
as a contender for an individual's legacy
revealing the contents of the steamer trunk
hidden in the attic
having been asked on Facebook chat
What's important? . . .
Weathering love's inconsistencies

you may want to consider the language
of divinity schools where shades of gray
are Wac-A-Moled into submission
to the delight of those on the wait list . . .
Content providers are providing content
for weekend do-it-yourselfers . . .
Why did you walk off the set? . . .
The troubling aftermath of parsing the logic
long listed drip-dried up and out . . .
into and out of the tropes
clutching the elusive, the untranslatable . . .
chopping and framing the sum of its parts
to evoke the essence of absence . . .
You're drowning in word soup and loving it . . .
backstroking to *Nothing Compares 2 U*
while down-time and emptiness haunt the backstory . . .
Wouldn't you rather smirk the passcode
reminiscing short stacks in the greasy spoon
of one of your past lives
when odysseyites stood on their heads
and busied themselves
assembling paraphernalia
for your next expedition
into a supermarket's labyrinthine aisles? . . .
Rehearsing lines for detox where talk-talk is restrung
with unwords for transposition . . .
rearranging the furniture of the mind
to extract the right answer
by rewording the question . . .
Of course, the drama of the get-go
with the feel of a silent movie . . .
eyes darting around the corners of the room
as if a mouse had sped past
slamming down chunks of cheddar
trailed by a reconfigured tabby . . .
The flattish physiognomy of the perp
under the cold, bleary sheets of confusion
opens the key to eventual deformity . . .
To hear the little click
for another season of reruns is OK . . .

even par for some of the players chomping
to borrow a phrase
for when the lake freezes over
with you dotting the horizon
in yet another rewrite
of your one wild and precious life
bought and sold by plagiarists
shoplifting future episodes for junkyard flâneurs
in search of thought bubbles
floating above orphaned backstreets . . .
You thought you had the journey all mapped out
dividing days
into passionate melodrama or befuddlement . . .
napping in transit as resident fashionista . . .
Ubers and Lyfts at your beck and call . . .
Upgrading short stacks from a *Dance Macabre . . .*
odysseyites promenading with corpses
along the boulevard
only to be messaged *stack overflow . . .*
That you decided at that point to shuffle the sequence
ballooned the palatability
to the delight of standins . . .
You could have danced all night . . . and you did . . .
Wait, there's more . . . it'll come to me . . .
that elusive construct that opens a dialogue
and you're off and running
with depositions about the hazards of following suit . . .
I know you know what I mean
having been interrogated again and again
about the meaning of meaning . . .
You said as much in discovery
and now you're living in a yurt
with midnight puppets
editing autofictions with invisible ink . . .
mirror images reflecting after-hour hookups . . .
It's not so much the tabbing . . . but flipping out
over the admittedly loose adaptation
of a fragmented backstory . . .
And this was elsewhere, yes? . . .
The provocativeness of close reading triggers

a memory that will prove your undoing ...
Still, it's a wonderful life, yes? ...
Clouds retreat in joy to the core of a volcano
on a remote island in a sea of forget-me-nots ...
A sidelong glance from before glimmers ...
You, in the moment, spend the rest of your allotment
running lines from award-winning one-acts
hoping, if nothing else, for a takeaway ...
You draw a line as if the why is adrift
in a soon-to-be-predicted snowstorm
when incomplete sentences flurry
and you, jacketed against the cold,
attempt a semblance of sanity
while talking heads feel compelled to cosplay ...
The moment-to-moment touch and go diminishes
especially now with crumpled scripts
cluttering the gazebo
where an Anthony Hopkins' lookalike
walks you through the proof with:
Let X equal the cold ...
In real life, it's not that simple ...
In real life, it takes a long time to break the ice ...
the entire ordeal offputting ...
You worry tragedians ...
You confirm the faces comprising your past selves
which your therapist, confusingly, demurs ...
Yet, a brisk walk awaits ... so you leave, quoting Woolf:
If a writer were free, there would be no plot ...
Your past lives gather in a room
filled with familiars ...
You're dumbfounded ... speechless ...
standing outside in knee-high grass ...
green and metronomic ...
An upright bass player
on loan from the produce section
of the food co-op
runs changes over the retractions
you're riffing ... prompting you
to peel a dead language
from the interim speaker of the House of Crazy

who casts his die midstream and arrives at a reception
where the scene unfolds with blank stares ...
Your mother's eyes redact the script ...
A director calls for softer thought bubbles ...
The move trips a flushed response
hurling the entire cast
into the bowels of a banned book ...
You want this hot early fall day to be enough
but it is not ...
With irrevocability looming, how can you be sure? ...
Unlocking the tee-time, OK, I get it,
but let's face it, it's nothing,
days pummeled with coffee and Danish ...
No one in the know ...
No other way ...
The joint had to have been bugged, yes? ...
Subjects flashing tenure, mashed with newsprint ...
Opening statements ... gappy, medieval references ...
The room in stitches ...
Talking heads ... He walked! ...
despite the fact they had chauffeured the angry twelve
in an unmarked vehicle, windows blackened ...
Yup, closed-mouthed
for the rest of the show, they were ...
It was positively 4th Street, or maybe 5th, I forget ...
Your spectrum of entanglements
continues to tickle comings and goings
Roman numerals stacked
fleeing into an anxious canyon
of choral meanderings
memories flooding the stairwell
evoked by the tracks on your mixtape ...
You're checking out playlists
trying to throw light on the passage of time ...
fragmentary dreamscapes draw you in ...
You've been tagged for a workgroup ...
the behind-the-scenes incidence of intimacy ...
It happens, yes? ...
The days into weeks into months into years ...
grasping at fillers to avert the inevitable? ...

Sitting there, smiling,
your tongue unleashed from its moorings . . .
unctuous in its wake . . .
as if regression took the wheel from some roadie
when, at the last misstep, you decide to stay a while . . .
Your younger self on a dirt bike pulls up to a light
and the cameras roll into the next decade
with ins and outs
tumbling through the paper drifts of assignments . . .
That was when you repainted your room
with your altered ego
leaving a memory of special effects in a milk truck
before dawn's early light . . .
The cavalcade of costumes
was well worth the tag team takedown
when eyes wide shut for unknown reasons
stepped in from another season of reruns . . .
The confusion addictive
but then we were all in the mix of *Mother Jones . . .*
the Dickinsonian obliquesness
conducive to auditioning for different roles . . .
a shoo-in for this and that . . . this and that . . .
And you in the ungraspable somewhere
flopping down on a couch
grabbing the remote
channel-surfing
leaping intuitively to the ending you must have . . .
these mere players playing their parts
their table-reads off the grid
between the lines
improvisational
winging-it
flying by the seat of their pants
scenes colliding, mounting to confusion . . .
The moment to moment . . .
Drafting the incense of homecoming
as you follow the directions . . .
the rights and lefts
climb the stairs, review your notes
one last time before entering . . .

Is this why you rise early
brimming with alterations? . . .
Little matter . . . no one will be duped . . .
Nothing incidental here
in the foundry of stamped emotion . . .
You can examine it, dissect it, take it for a walk . . .
without recrimination . . . without regret . . .
leaving indelible - and very real - turnabouts
for those who feel nothing about feeling nothing . . .
Blue-lined notebooks fat with FAQs
sideswipe with indifference . . .
You deconstruct backstreets
and hang out at a kiosk,
the one with BOGOs of pics
of your former selves -
some then . . . some now -
sorting through fragments
of what might have been . . .
the read-through pristine yet unconvincing
as if bell lappers knew all along
your retreat into the backdrop . . .
There will be additions
which you will fail to anticipate . . .
gorging yourself on hasbeens . . .
captivating onlookers with pretense
your costume re-engaging the opening masterfully . . .
You worry you're spending too much time
within the mirror in the mirror
memeing Proust's madelaine . . .
burned-out AI memory chips
spewing the anger and anguish
of living in The House of Crazy . . .
You're trying to capture the colors of the 13 moons
but the composition bullies down
the Rothkovian palette . . .
You decide True Blue will do
knowing Michelangelo bailed on *The Entombment*
because he couldn't afford ultramarine . . .
its extraction and production so prohibitive
that the semiprecious color was restricted

to the Christ and the Virgin Mary . . .
You fear the clock's relentless ticking . . .
Will you return now to the easel with snow forecast? . . .
Will your image remain long enough to be captured? . . .
Your dream sounds a diminished seventh
in a wine-soaked gritty eatery
with you wearing your want in bib-overalls
inventorying the dissonant conversations
that once filled the long, narrow, high-ceilinged
hallway to nowhere . . .
A chance encounter, the makeshift profile
a deluge of lines that grows tired
as you excuse yourself
onto a parallel stage
colored with red collared Maine Coons
big enough to intimidate . . . a perfect fit
for your inscrutable autofiction . . .
How often did standins speak their tongue? . . .
anticipation flooding their ludicrous logic . . .
a takedown by a passing mathematician
whose game theory panoply just out in paperback
leapfrogged to the top of some obscure list
of academic best sellers . . .
That the magicians left
is a rain-soaked late December morning
in a glut of jaundiced checkmates . . .
Your late night posturing
has opened a cabinet of Caligari moments
flooding a willingness
to split the session for odysseyites
miming on a gessoed stage . . .
The world will begin again
and again
with contemplatives appending
for appending's sake
while you, delightfully costumed,
will be seen through the half-inch
of a window left open
by one of your entourage
moving seductively to Mahler's *Fifth* . . .

You've misplaced the opening scene
where you in silhouette
disappear into an apartment building
in a late-night snow storm . . .
Inside the vacant apartment
miniature glass slippers
arranged paradoxically
speak to you extemporaneously . . .
You entertain the notion
of a dentist's appointment
for a loose crown . . .
or an afternoon feeding the bears
that wander onto the grassy knoll
looking for evidence . . .
Nothing can be done about this . . .
Nothing should be done about this . . .
The light will change
but isn't that usually the case
especially when ordering takeout? . . .
The mesmerization of the airbnb . . . a loophole
to magic your audience into hypnotic submission . . .
scripting the maelstrom of your wiles
with alternative mysteries
leading to the decreation of egocentrics
who are left to wander the empty boulevards
of Walmart Supercenters . . .
Your promiscuity alchemical . . . its weird threads
seducing those on the edge of aftermaths
feeding an inner mindscape yet to be embraced . . .
As if using a prepared piano
you explore the fringe between music and noise
experiencing emotions
as you write about them . . .
Is that something you even think about? . . .
Meaning? . . .
Cavorting with unbearables? . . .
Not sure . . .
but there always seems to be less to go on
especially when films echo the wavelengths of the lost
sitting with ferals napping on stoops . . .

Confronting silence with veiled undertones?...
Interpreted as joy?...
It's the presence, yes?...
That's it... the presence...
Questioning the call of odysseyites
inserting pronouns to enhance palatability...
But didn't you say you were confused
by the struggle to make it all fit
into a nice little takeaway?...
OK, maybe elsewhere...
Forget the trends... rampant on the boulevards...
There's more to it than that...
the pounding at the back door, for example,
or the voided wishes of inoccupants
in dilapidated storefronts...
It's probably worth the bother...
besides we all know you enjoy winging it
with the monochromatic subtones
of early morning drivebys...
Having discarded the template-a-minute app
as an unbearable lightness
confused by impersonators
you engage the drudgery of filling in the slots
while polishing stones from a not-so-hidden cache...
Altogether now with meaning, yes?...
You're drifting off-course...
the day's minutia fogging the lens
to say nothing of wannabes warming up...
The little green room is plantless...
an amalgam of exchange
without dawn's pristine view
reaching back for a foothold
or facsimile
which in time will revisit this memory...
This is not without precedent
but the moment-to-moment displacement
is hard to accept... let alone confront...
Your call-ins have been duly noted... and archived...
You're shadowing Kafka... with pointe shoes
spinning... spiraling...

into the tremendous world
inside his head
then it's on to the drone
with the speed of a grizzly
but not whose woods these are . . .
the plaintiff continuing despite admonitions
with someone alleging misappropriation . . .
Again, the unbearable whiteness
before the conductor
raises her baton to begin
reeling-in the orchestra
letting them know
where she wants them to go
giving the impression
they're behind the beat . . .
But they know . . . yes, they know . . .
not unlike the time you waded into the water . . .
baptismally, perhaps? . . .
quoting Gilgamesh
the unbearable heaviness . . .
the emptiness of the endgame . . . moving . . .
wait, not moving, no longer . . .
A matinee . . . but not . . .
flip it . . . to a rendering of the terrain . . .
You're riding the shapes of the books you have read . . .
the geometry of stories
etymological underpins
backstories
late night walks - real and imagined . . .
Self-mythologizing life's path or paths
however logical or reverential
may seem, if pressed against a whiteboard,
a mapping of your encounters
etched from bootleg tapes
whose words fill thought bubbles
alphabetizing utterances
from the street, the media, internet feeds . . .
It's not just that though is it? . . .
But what of hopscotching
the ongoingness of paradox? . . .

A trifle?... the intoxicating trance?...
the blindness of happiness?... I mean
you seem to be coming into the country of the end game
as it is, or better, as it will be... an alternate stage
upon which you can enact or re-enact your part...
Fat Tuesday kicks off a super bowl of Cajun gumbo...
Cybersecurity mavens schedule colonoscopies
with iCloud colorways
as if keyboarding members of the alphabet
to guide a 20-wheeler through the woods of words
would be enough to maintain a daily stepcount of 10,000
for a buy-back from the gods of uncertainty...
Repurposing confidential information next to a dogbed
is a bullet train back to the future
where rehearsals are more rehearsals
and the game afoot raises the stakes
to a sub two-hour marathon
fixed on the window of a Magic 8 Ball...
The drama resurfaces in water under the bridge
quenching no one's thirst... with you
leaving the table of random numbers without a word
without finishing the song... driving away
into sheets of sound...
You're collapsing the story... but why?...
Why this segue into alienation
with voices at the back door?...
No, not gallows humor, not just yet...
You have come too far to fear the end...
of course, it's all about coming
at the drama from a distance
all stops pulled out
the perspective just that
and, what, you're trying to reel it in?...
You do recall the reshoot
after several lines had been cut
leaving you at loose ends, yes?...
a kind of detachment
even about the most intimate of details
fanning out like a stacked deck of cards
with the magician asking you to pick one...

There's more to it, sure, but let's not, not now . . .
You're turning the room inside out
looking for the missing link
you forgot to include in your email . . .
Rhode Island Reds cluck news feeds . . .
the regulated symbol in art
smearing your dreamscape lakeside
with the cinematography grammatical
to showcase your outré demeanor . . .
It's nothing . . . really, this imagining
as if one were willing to retreat
to a safer pop-up monastically . . .
even with everything curated, yes? . . .
Thinking a reshoot of the end game
is one way to pass this late season snowstorm . . .
The hiking paths wait . . .
This pincushiony dynamic is offputting
to say the least . . . it can't help but raise a flag
to the 365 days of summer . . .
It's something to think about, I suppose,
especially when considering footwear
and the miles and lines to be traversed . . .
I hate to remind you but those cyberdays
keep coming back, their moves color-coded
for easy turnstiling . . . and more . . .
Flat screens are a turn on . . .
Reminds me of Miles cranking out however many hits
to fulfill his contract and join Columbia . . .
Lately you've been lapse . . . and why is that? . . .
The intricacies of intimacy
with you elsewhere retooling your philosophy . . .
Nietzsche's *We have art so we don't die of reality?* . . .
Is that it? . . . OK, I'll play along
with the casual dress code
but now what? . . . now you're complaining
because you're telling me
that complaining kickstarts creating
and isn't that what we're all about? . . .
Like listening to someone's words
as if on the noisy soundstage of a silent film

or listening to a serial open mic reader
whose words supply a different narrative
every time someone texts
or listening to your own words
dress-coded for undertow with boxy takeaway . . .
Illusory, perhaps? . . .
Reupping with the help of an intimacy coach
should do it . . .
The tiresome bobbing and weaving
obliterate the string of pearl days
basking in the unseasonable 50s . . .
What you thought you heard
is what you heard . . . at least according to hearsay . . .
Emptying a bottle of invisible ink
to the Big Pharma of resolution
is an AI monologue composed
not from images but from words . . .
Objections disallowed by dissonance, yes? . . .
How can masterworks survive
in this forensic undercurrent? . . .
A din drifts in from the back room
where pleas are bargained
before headlining virtual tabloids . . .
Your lines riskng enjambment
will doubtless make the six o'clock news . . .
And now you're cutting and pasting . . .
exiting through the gift shop
with Billie Eilish's *What Was I Made For?* . . .
An uncertainty about how to live? . . .
A turning like the turning of the seasons? . . .
An image of a face from long ago
but the entanglement is like a train
leaving a station recalled
for a phrase rethought . . .
Enough to cross the bridge
with street cred and sky-high interest rate . . .
Not that you haven't been warned . . .
It's the unremitting arrogance
of a violist da gamba stopping by woods
on a snowy evening quoting from

a remaindered copy of *How Should a Person Be?...*
Your costume mishap is a trailer park
and the horses in Patti Smith's
debut studio album are having none of it...
eating and drinking their shortlisted lives
in the orchard that went viral
while you studied your reflection
in a glass bead game not unlike Ahab's
He's dead but he beckons...
And here comes everybody's electronic music
with Moby Melville... his rhyming dictionary
off the grid he meant to Uber...
Buybackers stream... yet another example
of wardrobe anxiety from your out-and-about days
of celebrity passcodes...
This will begin... and this too will begin...
dreamscapes overshadowing your vintage items...
Regressing to some well-worn route
leading to a floor-through apartment
back-burnered with mirrored images...
Nothing is ready for you...
Nothing will be ready for you...
Appointments are backed into double wides...
This is not new... consolation prizes
leak language barriers... a throwback to the days
you shoplifted muffled noises
only to be disappointed by more days
of exceptions... or expectations, whatever...
You concede a strange bunch of circumstances
abutting a consolation of sorts
nothing to complain about... yet
but someone's interior monologue is about to sound...
It could be UPS
in the guise of medievalism or innuendo...
You're tizzied over an early arrival...
Try not to get hammered again... there's no need...
not that there ever was...
at least according to the transcript...
It could be just what the doctor ordered
not unlike when your development was muted

and you were on your clovenly way . . .
You sport incompletion at an archaeological dig
with Etruscan vases and dental instruments
playing the part with players playing root canals
costumed as shattered visages . . .
The lone and level sands pull out into traffic . . .
You disappear into a labyrinth of words
but manage to recite your way out
with *No coward soul is mine* by Emily Brontë
whose disregard for convention
makes for an enjoyable trek
across the Yorkshire moors of someone's dreamscape . . .
A draft of a manuscript is being read aloud
by a voice from the air . . .
Crows mock crows . . .
You enter the scene idiosyncratically loose
in bib overalls and Mucks
approaching as if in the middle of a paper spree . . .
An unshapely tuft of something begins . . .
It's all about dreamscapes in Rothkovian colorways . . .
The mist . . . as written, yes? . . .
but why this consequence by an unknown? . . .
I mean you could have just as easily engaged
with the cameras rolling . . . as discussed . . .
I'm not sure you're ready to apply the rules
of present tense . . . when the color of time being
is finished anyway . . . staying out beyond curfew . . .
of course you remember that day
on the street when the rightful owner
emerged from a late-model SUV
and began interviewing you for the next installment . . .
This is where the metaphor gets a little screwy
with you playing the part . . .
whatever the part may be . . .
knowing that observing the inconspicuous
is your forte . . .
Let's start with an invisible person
sampling poutine at a diner . . .
They leave their cell phone at a bakery
with a baguette and stories to tell . . .

Are they a tourist?... Maybe later...
Cut to a lump of clay shape-shifting...
toggling the fourth wall as if a gift horse's mouth...
Are you OK with the vegetables in your garden?...
Let your family know...
This is important...
Family relationships are well worth
their autofictitious melodramas...
Think Tolstoy...
Everyone thinks about changing the world
and no one thinks about changing themselves...
How this came to this is well worth the time
it took for you to open the door
to an unknown sound...
A cellist in the woods works through
a Bach sarabande...
You're inventorying defining moments
trying to decide which one to include in your proposal
for grant money to mount your play
which you haven't begun to write, so you're like,
This may be a defining moment,
with feet entering the five and dime from your
childhood, drawn from a linebook
by the director of that over-the-top production
where everyone was fitted with a body double
to stand in when excitement paled,
but now with the defining moment head-butting,
you turn to no one and begin improvising
a selection of Beckettian anecdotes because,
just because, you're in the mood to name-drop...
A Polaroid of young people at a beach
and the tale of the white Donald Duck tank suit
dripping with the full catastrophe begins...
A return to the days of then
soundtracked by 45s
the carefree exchange of goods and services
Jerry's *Long Strange Trip...*
high heels clicking on a 4 AM sidewalk
following an *n* of 2 or 3 or 4...
all legs and arms and hair and words

streams flooded with binge
when . . . *fanfare, please* . . . a bread truck
rolls onto the scene
with Henry Miller at the wheel
Can I give you a lift?. . .
so you climb on
for yet another ride
costumes aplenty
experiences aplenty
memories aplenty . . .
Regrets? . . . A few . . . You too? . . .
La-di-da, la-di-da, la, la . . . à la Annie Hall . . .
years later . . . an ice storm cometh . . .
its outage an insult to the Age of Crocs . . .
The world teeters on the edge
of Hawking's *uninhabitable . . .*
yoked to this and that . . . this and that . . .
and your hand . . . their hand . . . a full house . . .
You've become enamored of the invisible,
the mystery of entanglements . . .
It's not so much the unknown,
it's the excitement
of being seduced by the moment,
the feeling of engagement, a shared journey . . .
The sloop of your dreams, drifting . . .
This performative feeling about writing . . .
that it's not set in stone . . .
that it's not closed down, not done . . .
never done . . . is good! . . .
You wake to an openness . . .
a blank page, an empty canvas . . .
And, no, it's not too late
to resume the close reading of your autofiction . . .
to experience deconstruction . . .
A bookstore materializes long enough
for you to buy your book, which isn't for sale . . .
Someone chimes in with *sequencing is arbitrary . . .*
Where does that fit in? . . .
Nothing wrong with being inquisitive . . .
Better than being aggressive or defensive, yes? . . .

The slippery slope of misinterpretation?...
of misunderstanding?...
The time left is now...
your experimental film... infinitely looped...
You're taking a line for a walk
to capture the cherry blossoms along the River Styx...
It's a day in someone's life, yes?...
The someone who was promised this but given that...
How unlikely...
Then the excitement of the roles you took on
after the barman's Last Call
bloating your Little Black Book
with fingerprints from your 'tweens...
You were dusted... and sent home...
Your Hokas make the unseen seen
with canned images from the produce section
of the neighborhood Hannaford...
Plans to repair the fence
trampled by wolves in sheeps' clothing
en route to grandma's
await the results of COVID testing...
The director of Netflix's *Ripley*
refuses to believe it... or not...
There once was a time... you suppose...
Recall the chef you went to high school with
deboning your salmon steak
while in an antechamber
a one-nighter riffed on a Fender?...
You wanted so much for it to be...
The deck is stacked but you know that...
Veganism?... OK, veganism...
There's loneliness in acceptance, yes?...
The time your pickup broke down
leaving you stranded in Nowhereland
only to be dropped off at a subway stop
staring at the third rail
as if onlookers refused the magic
of your harmless costume...
And later at the bus stop
where rehearsals got out of hand

and the day became a graphic novel
in a strange tongue . . .
You knew this but continued your renderings
rubbing your hands together between your legs as if . . .
As if, what? . . .
As if the director would call a reshoot? . . .
Take a moment to close read your journal
then return to the diorama of your neighborhood . . .
Forget inevitability . . .
Your earlier self inhabits the body . . .
A trolley on a back street searches for passengers
who were meant to be elsewhere . . .
You'd better not hear me say that! . . .
the weird aftertaste when you at least tried . . .
then the green of a standin
asleep in the other room . . .
Yes, perhaps the endgame
which if nothing else will stoke the confusion . . .
Someone will be kicked to the curb
before the overflow is reckoned with
and rendered inconsequential . . .
You began the conversation on a positive note . . .
a concert A? . . .
yes, that's it, you said, recognizing
the ramifications of a lost lyric
in the early morning, no, no, not that,
it wasn't that, I'm sure . . .
It's not about making the cut
the call and response . . . that sort of thing
reconfigured from audio files
dropped off at a transfer station . . .
It's about a musical suite in a stand of pines . . .
Can you imagine the confusion
of a left turn . . . then another . . . and another? . . .
Nervous motion, head jerks, tics, shouts . . .
The sinister recording of happenstance
followed by a rewind, a retelling . . .
You practice your lines in a two-way mirror
plagiarizing last night's notes
ghosts escaping into the semantic ether

balancing tongues
at least believing such
that this is the way you have learned
to manage the world . . .
to manage *you* in the world . . .
Something will come undone . . .
You will then fondle happy moments
lip-syncing the middle of a chapter
from your childhood's diorama
carried along by the current . . .
your grocery list sheepishly revealing the answer
to a question you have yet to ask . . .
the neighborhood's scammed
as odysseyites fill their foreigns
with ancient myths . . .
As if at one remove . . . transcribing
the moment to moment with reverse innuendo . . .
a reason for everything
a reason for the body
a reason for the body of the other . . .
Squeezing through an eastern window
the process beginning years ago
adding language's decrepitude to the mix
of polishing a lens . . . a lens to better see . . .
To better see what? . . .
To better see anything . . . everything . . .
and look, there's even room for more . . .
Do you expect the end as predicted? . . .
howling through a nor'easter
(kidding, but how about if it were) . . .
then struggling to get the words right . . .
another backstory arriving on the 1:05
with conspicuous palettes to color whatever 'scapes
you have prepared a pitch for . . .
Illusory at best, yes? . . .
This freedom of treading the remains of the day
caressing costumes
pocketing smiles
not unlike a silent film
where the audience can see what the actors cannot . . .

Gawking at the exhibit
within the resilience of a gift shop
an oasis ensconced in the rude . . .
later mapping the yellow brick road
perhaps indefinitely
noting the binge of history
as a way to memorialize your having been here . . .
convincing the watcher at the gate that your words
are suitcased and ready for a weekend getaway . . .
You recall Anne Carson on swimming:
Smoothing out the strokes in water
filled with anxieties:
You can fail it with each stroke.
What does that mean, fail it? . . .
The poet, John Ashbery, blocked, envisioned
three empty oblong boxes to fill with words . . .
He dipped into *The Cloud of Unknowing . . .*
You like this idea and decide to try it . . .
filling a container with words
and whipping them into a poem . . .
Finding your way in a forest of well-crafted similes . . .
the rationales we muster . . .
What are you talking about? . . .
You know, to pass muster . . .
But is it that easy? . . .
No, not easy, there are huge holes . . .
yes, holes, that could trip you up
so that you'd have to start over again . . .
Sisyphean . . .
especially now, with the final station
coming into view . . .
Nonetheless, . . .
The neighborhood Carl Jung
behind the wheel of a red Ferrari
slam dunks the shyness
that smacks you back
to the darkness of OCD . . .
cruising your bimonthly talking cure
filled with nightscapes
of lion-obsessed Venetian iconographies

the size of Rhode Island ...
You do enjoy these costumey affairs
collecting your unconscious
with pretend puddings
and freedom from counting syllables ...
The theater of limitations
is always open ... with words
arranged salon-style from floor to ceiling ...
The sound of paint applied to a surface
wants to tell you something ...
Tomorrow oscillates in the beauty we seek ...
As if the movie was afraid ...
so in the first episode
this face ... and you're thinking
take this face through the whole movie
but nope, you're tossed into a dark room
writing over your writing
because you can't see ...
words like dictation
the rain in Spain gives you wet brain ...
Now you're worrying about remembering
to google unclogging a drain ...
It's like that
the obliqueness
trying to fit it all into some designated,
predetermined framework ...
The delusion of illusion, yes?...
and you're riffing on the responsibility
of the artist not to look away ...
to render what to you is real ...
But it's late, really late
for these visitors ... these night stalkers
too late to be assailed
by the critic at the gate ...
Too many weary heads
dislocating too many weary shoulders ...
You were shrunk by a shrink in a pop-up
during a blow-out BOGO sale
words flying off shelves
into Dharma bowls

prepped by line cooks for enlightenment . . .
presentation is everything, yes? . . .
There was a time . . . I mean . . .
I'm not sure what I mean . . .
without the script, perhaps? . . .
walking Commercial Street
past Mary Oliver's ghost
sitting outside her oceanfront cottage
then on to the other end
Stanley Kunitz's tiered garden
snakes dangling head-down, entwined
in a brazen love-knot . . .
the tide lapping the Provincetown Inn
with memories of The Moors . . .
more than a bit raffish . . .
presided over by Scooter, the pet owl . . .
There is no other life . . .
Gary Snyder's homage
to log truck drivers:
In the high seat, before-dawn dark,
Polished hubs gleam
And the shiny diesel stack
warms and flutters
Up the Tyler Road grade
To the logging on Poorman creek.
Thirty miles of dust.
There is no other life . . .
This to be archived for odysseyites
in a reconfigured deconsecrated chapel
near Portofino, Italy . . .
Augustine pockets pears and spills beans
in thirteen books
the self merely source material
a lost wax process
for the staging of bigger questions . . .
Cezanne paints his apples
and rewrites the laws of perspective . . .
logorrhea is a masturbatorially public act . . .
The endeavor complicates . . .
one word follows another

not as its sequel but as its unmaking . . .
You distort . . . intentionally . . . unintentionally
and become enamored of your own engagement . . .
your own autofiction . . .
You roll out virtual howitzers
and execute reams of legal pads
hopscotching metaphors
on lines of macadam
awaiting wait staff for today's specials . . .
How to make it so to seem doable
especially now with summer people
collecting shells of happiness
drifting offshore
in and out of doors and into whitewashed rooms
unencumbered by a mind of winter . . .
You, like them, are shaped by resistance
tucking sheets . . .
pulling them into neat corners
while the commute slows
dropping morning news anchors . . .
You insist you can be more than a swinger of birches . . .
You've had your fill of adult playpens
popping up in motion-sickness modules
of deconstructed shopping malls . . .
The oppressive heat forces you to chill
in the supermarket's frozen food section
brimming with memoirists
collecting empties for eternity's sake . . .
It's all part of someone's master plan . . .
you're sure of it . . . despite fashionistas
shadowing you with shoulda woulda couldas . . .
The takeaways, yes, the takeaways, remain dicey . . .
And why is that? . . .
Surely the director allowed ample opportunity
for whatever directors allow ample opportunity for . . .
Film Studies 101 is about to stream *The Turin Horse . . .*
Do you think you're ready? . . .
You worry language and drama-splicing . . .
the abracadabra-ness of the day
as Walmarteers stuffed with colorways

bottleneck roundabouts . . .
It's summer . . . waters are being tested . . .
You've streamed the beaches
with an eye on binge-reading
the short stories in *The Canon*
beginning with John Cheever's *The Swimmer*
starring Burt Lancaster as Ned Merrill
in skin tight trunks
swimming across the county
in neighbors' pools
but it's fragmenting because Burt
is throttling a steam locomotive in *The Train*
which pit him as French Resistance-member Paul Labiche
against German Colonel Franz von Waldheim
played by Paul Scofield,
who is trying to move stolen art by train to Germany . . .
In the final scene
von Waldheim stays with the derailed train
crammed with crates
labeled with the names of artists . . .
Labiche appears . . .
Von Waldheim mocks Labiche as artless . . .
Labiche shoots von Waldheim . . .
Percy Shelley and his wife Mary
a wild-eyed young redhead
backpack stuffed with *Frankenstein*
enter as if on cue . . .
the lone and level sands stretching far away . . .
You have a reputation for down time
for rearranging players and their parts . . .
It's all there . . . in your notebooks . . .
on your (un)zip drive . . .
It has become your mantra . . .
Incomplete sentences . . . written with crayons
follow in your wake . . .
The manner in which they carry themselves
and the questions . . . left unanswered . . .
Trying to construct reality with Legos, yes? . . .
You and your erotic other captured on tape
with sticky wickets . . .

I never believed in falling prey to pews
but then again . . . and again . . .
Something is sure to befall one-nighters . . .
Nights of reruns with brief, lost faces
feed the illusion of prediction
as if a magician's assistant living out of a suitcase
were cut in half . . .
location . . . location . . . location . . .
You as stopgap at the supermarket
comparing tongues with other sous chefs
squeezing into line for a virtual rollerama
of one-upmanship . . .
sampling tidbits for a breakout special
enjambed with abandon
awaiting a redo of *The Breakfast of Champions . . .*
The resident Kerouacian behind the deli counter
types a cemetery
on a roll of butcher paper . . .
a makeover for aspirants outside the walls
carries you through a thicket of unknowns
with one-way tickets to elsewhere . . .
The theatrics begin . . . with words up . . . words down
rehearsals . . . do not pass Go . . .
You know how it is
with everyone talking . . . at the same time . . .
It's tough to follow the storyline
if there is a storyline
but then some stories are better without a storyline . . .
Just let the events unfold
in your pocket . . . I don't care . . .
little matter where . . .
Whatever's convenient for you
I'm trying to wrap my head around something
that will get me through the next few hours
or the next few minutes . . .
Escaping through the cracks in your argument
following bread crumbs to the Temple of Incidentals
restless long legs
parody of a back-flap biography
you fret over brands of black pepper

focus on the container . . .
Stepping out onto the deck with eggs over easy, yes? . . .
And coffee? . . .
The seemingly insignificant? . . .
There's nothing wrong with invisibility
and lemon juice . . . held up to a light bulb
selecting from menu options
making do . . . treading water . . .
Come prepared to defend your thesis . . .
You count out change from a shiny metal change counter
attached to your belt with Velcro . . .
You score a merit badge for the likes of this . . .
Isn't this romantic? . . .
An aging-out squeezebox expands and contracts
to the gesticulations of bystanders . . .
It's a day away from eBay . . .
Forging ahead nonetheless
with less than Clayton Moore and Jay Silverheels
you wait tables in reruns
buttdialing Ubers for Q&As
while running changes with after-hour noodlers . . .
A good misstep
as innocuous as an up-close-and-personal . . .
The subject has become the object . . .
It happens whenever you click *Search* . . .
igniting associations . . .
The tendency to remain open
while people hover . . . submitting requests . . .
Are you ready to give it up? . . . to give in? . . .
Let's hope not . . . at least not until
your fingers are ready
and the score is on the stands . . .
Opening statements, please . . .
What if we were to record every other word? . . .
Would nonsense reign? . . .
Would it become the New Now? . . .
You were late . . . with revisions . . . only
to be called out . . . for redundancy . . .
You're charged with toggling the laugh track
while waiting in the checkout line

at the supermarket . . .
The manager is a clown suit . . .
A clown suit is a root canal sans Novocain . . .
A clown suit is a box lunch . . .
An after-the-fact afterthought . . .
Your flight is taxiing
and now the ticket person in a clown suit
is telling you you're in the wrong line
but there's a million dollar smile
on a million dollar baby
in a million dollar condo
with a million dollar *(fill in the blank)* ___
Postcards from the corner office offer tips
on managing the parts of life that make no sense:
seductive five-star creamsicles
soundtracked by melodic lines
nursing pentatonic and catatonic scales . . .
You pride yourself on inscrutable self-scrutiny
the examined life . . . and all that
as if parroting fan-fiction of *The Canon*
makes dumbing down the default . . .
So why the obsession with spoon-fed fork-tonguers? . . .
The files . . . sight-read
have been sealed . . . and now
your raised hand is being co-dependently ignored . . .
the almostness of your borderline personality
carrying on about the leaks in emptiness
that accompany Bruegger's Everything Bagels
and the duffel bags . . . of risky narcissists
adorned with fidgety flight tags
from the Bucket's *100 Places to Visit Before Passing . . .*
Stay the merriment became your duly-noted mantra
even after your breaths exceeded the numbers
and you hop-scotched with bouquets of trillium
that happened by on their way
to yet another ho-hum commercial break
that . . . despite the menagerie . . .
always made you chuckle . . .
especially when Facebook friends
pointed to lapses in serving styles . . .

And you do believe yourself, yes?
This poem is a game of scrabble . . .
a game of babble
a game of mirrored sunglasses reflecting
a box of colored pencils . . . as you
thumb through Augusten Burroughs' *Dry*
inviting a tangle of lines leading to a fun house
in the middle of a re-enactment . . . as if
parallel parking a shopping cart were sufficient . . .
Again you argue the clock
with thoughts of a drybrush masterpiece
by Andrew Wyeth . . . at the Fenimore Museum . . .
Everyone deserves a break today . . .
Why today? . . .
Why today the blue vacuum with dry load
applied to a dry support
from your days
revitalizing sober living apartments? . . .
A one-size-fits-all transcription of experience
and your mind's ear takes a break today at Mickey D's -
generic, anti-confessional, without
the clawing happenstance of a Johnny Depp lookalike
backstroking in a sea of Elmer's Glue . . .
You continue to get antsy over dead zones . . .
Who doesn't? . . . but do we need two of anything? . . .
Attention-deficit mavens and their obsession
with the gap between fit and finish
transforming stage directions into librettos
puts one in the mood for a slice of pizza
with the works . . .
Isn't it time to resume the obligatory? . . .
Can you imagine? . . .
Not unlike the postmodern foisted upon minions
when no one was looking
and the brownout was force-fed . . .
And just when you thought it was safe
to go back in the water, yes? . . .
A discomfort has crept into the scene . . .
OK, but what's going to happen will happen, yes? . . .
Tell me, have you packed a picnic lunch? . . .

We hold our breaths as companions of the dying
and zoom in to color-code innuendoes
tabled from past table-reads . . .
There was a beginning
something bespoke as is so often the case
in this word-flurried world
with dwellings conjured from sand . . .
You're about to reserve your spot in the moment
which will proceed as these moments typically do
approaching a fork . . . and then? . . .
You're three-quarters in, more like four-fifths . . .
the fit and finish
of many years of off-and-on attempts
at involvement, at engagement . . .
The files in your folder labeled *fodder . . .*
encryption, hybridity, binaries . . .
Think devolution . . . if you want to spiral . . .
and please don't bring up the failed-essay deal
as if you default aspire to fragmentation . . .
If only counters zeroed-out
maybe you wouldn't . . .
Wouldn't what? . . .
There will be no retrospection today . . .
or tomorrow . . .
That was then, yes? . . .
Try the trip-wire
re-creating or recreating the page
with clips from a different genre . . .
Which is? . . .
You know, prose poems
mimicking oral storytelling . . .
Yes, and so begins the mismatch:
a minute ago you were 25 . . .
and now? . . .
I suppose preponderance . . .
That makes no sense . . .
And here comes Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares . . .*
That neither . . .
OK, how about *to the manner born*
with yourself inside yourself

filling notebooks
using the *Leonardo Encryption App*
day in day out . . .
Mind-boggling show and tells
puppy-like on makeshift silent-screen backlots
sometimes among headstones
to make the most of rubbings . . .
The sacred geometry of chance . . .
Then elapsation . . . and you're elsewhere
jabbering for roles that highlight
your good-to-the-last-drop selfies . . .
If only the timer . . .
Photoshopped, perhaps? . . .
But that's not the shape of your heart, yes? . . .
What matters is no longer a matter . . .
up and out with tail no longer bushy . . .
A necromancer materializes
to choreograph a dance with realignment
and proprioception for flagging élans vital . . .
Disparate marks quotes letters numbers . . .
indifference spilling over onto the floor
and you're telling me about
the day's little tragedies . . .
the interiority enlarged
squashing decouplings of moments
that were chosen to color the room
where someone is doing laps
in a claw-footed tub . . .
On the far hill two castles . . .
You're answering texts with your voice
carrying the irrelevancy in your canvas backpack . . .
You worried pleather then opted for cerulean
which has nothing to do with the overdue landscape . . .
It's OK, yes? . . . hoping not to disrupt
the train of thought chuffing toward derailment . . .
Circus wagons will be cleared in no time . . .
Think puppets . . . that always seems to work . . .
Am I wrong? . . .
Regardless, the late summer morning is happily
urging voices to sample the mélange . . .

Soon, streets will be overrun with tourists . . .
Again, a near miss . . .
Days and nights . . . days and nights
encounters in off hours
with translators of Ancient Greek
you and sleep parting ways
your self-portrait mirrored in a convex mirror . . .
blindfolded, yet? . . .
I mean, of course, until . . . on the horizon . . .
palms up . . . weighing the air . . .
anticipating departure . . .
You sometimes worry in the middle of it
how they're faring . . .
referencing Tolstoy on kindness
a segue to a conversation about why . . .
Forget that . . .
You want to haze transformations (OK, I get it!)
too excited too much too late . . .
it seems to click in so nicely
you want to take this poem on vacation, yes? . . .
Dylan's *Queen Jane Approximately:*
That you're tired of yourself
and all of your creations . . .
and in the Summer of Love
Princess Summerfall Winterspring
confronts Phineas T. Bluster
about his untoward gestures
that back in the day of black and white
was tossed in a circular file . . .
Someone's voice catches on the sound stage
and *The Man With A Thousand Faces*
appears at the organ in the bowels
of Paris's *Palais Garnier Opera House*
with Christine awakening to a music box's combs:
I remember there was mist
Swirling mist upon a vast glassy lake
There were candles all around,
and on the lake there was a boat
And in the boat there was a man.
But now you're bottlenecked in a queue

for the computer at the library
with this CEO person gesturing to this IT person
and you know you've been drafted
into a focus group
with all the clowns you have commissioned
having died in battle or in vain
to rewrite the opening scene to *The Turin Horse*
because Sea Shepherd lost the battle
against the whale hunters . . .
with Facebook friends defusing the shiftiness
seeping into your daily bowl of organic oatmeal
affixing itself to that rare elegant lapse
in a small gallery on the third floor
where long-limbed bronzes
crowding the poorly-lit hallways
have pulled it off . . . echoing Dylan's
and you're sick of all this repetition . . .
Won't you come see me, Queen Jane?. . .
as the train pulls out of the station
for the Guggenheim's posthumous exhibit
of On Kawara's *Silence . . .*
Across the Hudson . . . Albany . . .
Take for instance the still lifes
that stammer choices in cafés . . .
the still lifes that could be amped-up
with nothing more than a toggle . . .
The dealer has just cleared her hands
for the eye in the sky
while the pit boss pilots his skiff
toward the Burning Man . . .
You're thumbing options . . .
transcribing the title
of your final Golden Book . . .
a Seussian mix of alleged allegory:
Oh, the Places You've Been . . .
Encryption is key
with Beckett's *maybe* as failsafe, yes? . . .
Without the venue it could flop
not that that would rewrite
the chorale but if you're placing

your bet on cacophony you'll appreciate
the metronomic meaning qua meaning ...
The backstory jumped bail, leaving you
with fragments and a breakout hit
in a car chase ...
Cosplaying ... again?...
What do you mean you're not sure?...
You know, I'm not sure, so I'm waffling ...
This is important ... the lines
as elements of style that blunder along ...
There were quite a few ... and, yes,
it was edgy which made it exciting
but the blowback had to be reconciled
with whomever was involved ...
or maybe not, I don't know ...
You mean the party of the first part?...
Then, everyone was left with jottings
for memoirs, I suppose, following
what Paley calls *the open destiny of life ...*
The endgame ... the warning track ...
and you're about to hit the wall ...
Having a plot fenced you in, OK?...
keyboardiing your experiences ... or
assumptions ... or allegations on your laptop?...
Indeed, you're not sure ...
Maybe retracing your steps
with a refurbished script ...
new words ... different words ...
that sort of thing ...
You ignore repetitions ... fractals ...
an infinity of repeats
and squeeze into a backbend ...
departures circling in a rattletrap
as if and only if the unloved
forgotten ... momentarily ...
surge to forgiveness ...
How many times will the times beckon
intimating *disposable*
without really thinking it through ...
not unlike Wittgenstein's

If a lion could speak . . .
The probabilities at the table
in the windowless room
plastered with Vermeers
sometimes go viral
when bad stuff happens
and people want to confirm their confusion
or mystify their position . . .
Too precious . . .
Choose small in big
and with that the elements of chance . . .
Of course, you may lust . . . out of desperation . . .
watching sculls turn the stake
in an oil by Eakins . . . and *You Are There*
with Walter Cronkite . . . Sunday evenings
at seven . . . always . . .
Artifactuals like cluster fly innuendos . . .
suitcases left open . . .
Never again, yes? . . .
You are adamant about hyperbolic clickbait
stretching late night moments
into roundabouts
with red double-decker buses
checking overdue promises that once held . . .
And only now you worry the elements? . . .
First paint a cage with an open door . . .
Your books fester
raking words for combinations of letters . . .
The UPS truck will see you now . . .
Your dream in a dream,
shifting down, recalibrating . . .
the shoulders seductive
their angularities mesmeric . . .
Vendors arrive, and fishmongers . . .
Wine glasses mingle . . .
Bangles promise other worlds . . .
And now you're crossing the street,
and she's asking . . . something? . . .
Sit down on this bench, please, take a break,
rewind the tape . . .

Meanwhile, in the park, *The Life of Pi* . . .
Your halter top loosens for a motorcycle working
through the gears of epistemology
as if the nothing in the epic
is worth mulling over . . .
Generations of mimes have done this
for outpatients who in sultry moments
defer to traffic signals coded to lie . . .
AI for all, yes? . . .
Yeats appears in a side street black Subaru
to advance yardage
as specced in the last episode . . .
perhaps *the* last episode as we wander
across the mind's moors singlehandedly
expecting closure . . . but no one will be there . . .
Can you imagine the anticipation
at this time of year when all by default
are bemoaning? . . . Forget it,
the creek has embraced a perpetual shudder . . .
The facades with their onomatopoeias
capturing moments on the fly
as is so often the wish . . .
Understanding will arrive in a Cybertruck
as you remove your Uggs
to enter a marsh in search of the assignment . . .
Yes, you're hoping an enhancement . . .
And if it doesn't
you will still be able to scroll . . .
You're trying too hard to make do with whatever
was brought to bear on the latest makeshift . . .
Of course this will go down and then it won't . . .
comparison shopping breeds confusion . . .
you've seen evasions rippling through
as the shoals of vexation mutate
into a muddled equation . . .
Impressionable temporaries, yes? . . .
with moments of grammar drilling down
and then the main attraction appears as if . . .
You would think not wouldn't you? . . .
especially in those moments

when you're imagining a quartet of abstractions
posing as the four seasons
on the Outer Banks
while in this big rig
you are being strip-searched
by a string of tangled marionettes
who couldn't care less
about your precious autofictions . . .
It's bending time, yes? . . .
The smooth sailing before the plug is pulled
the plagiarized love notes
from odysseyites en route to the Gates of Hell . . .
The voiceovers persist . . .
a discordant feed to the rehearsal
when you're hit with that same old same old . . .
You're talking rinky-dink geometries
for future listeners of *Symphony No. 7*
in A major . . . Allegretto . . .
endless drive-thrus of muted thoughts
while shuffling pages for reenactors
jotting embellishments
which one can only hope will carry the theme
to the next apotheosis in the score . . .
Cutting the deck proves nothing . . .
the cards jumping through the hoops of b-ball
for insomniacs boggling smartphone screens
rhapsodically nightmarish . . .
You want to believe in running the changes
laid out in microtones
as if auditionees crowding the wings
for a chance to enter a reminiscence
will be given the go-ahead . . .
You invent words in a secret garden
where you can walk and talk to yourself
without your mobile . . .
You owe it to others to approach exultation . . .
Can you lose the punctuation? . . .
Can you ever be alone? . . .
Open mics replace your words
to begin the game of on-and-on . . .

Your hair will commence momentarily ...
this and that ... this and that ...
You're removing persons of interest
from the two-way mirror in your room ...
The decision is pretense ...
Several will chime in with ghost bubbles ...
The bath works wonders
but please be careful not to overdo it
especially when the plug is pulled ...
Your smartphone has gone radio silent
while interrogators make their way
along the *Street of Crocodiles*
with other reconfigured short stories
eager to disappoint ...
The disinterest unsettles ...
An iceberg moment, no doubt,
trying to savor the latest vintage
with concomitant misspellings ...
Your irresponsibility was sharp and gorgeous
with inconspicuous chords
that stayed the complexity of the moment
which you mentioned looked you in the eye
before settling elsewhere ...
Quite fascinating, yes? ...
This moment caught on tape
in the land of painful blisses ...
Bricks will merge with sand
leaving others sipping tea
while scrolling through terms of endearment
for oohs and ahhs ...
It seems all the same ...
these striped ventures
loaded with guilty pleasures
seducing implants with aromatic codes
written late at night by amanuenses on leave ...
Your medieval wall hangings talk the talk
for fact-checkers ... opportunists
firing up fire pits ... preachy-like ...
If it comes off ... and well, I mean,
when was the last time that dropped? ...

not unlike the whiteout
that made driving crazy
for tagalongs from other times, other worlds . . .
You found magic in the lower forty
asking directions
which prompted questions
from passersby rubbernecking in disbelief . . .
You doubled in spiked heels with a wooden
Louisville Slugger followed by a double header
for oglers-in-training . . . the gearbox
of your Suzuki mimicking the Uggs
you carried in your backpack
for occasional rock-a-days
shredding dirt bikes under the Passaic Falls
as bewildered as pointers in a perfumery
their words baseball trading cards
holding tickets
to a Saturday *Creature Double Feature*
rarely searching for lost time
as memorialized by a closeted deadhead
scalping instructions
for *Around the World with a Yo-yo . . .*
The passing of notes in your cube
trialed the lifespan of Bics, scribbling spam
for residents of Williams's *Ghost Town*
awestruck by the pediatrician's
It's all in the ear . . .
You journeyed elsewhere with a Moleskine notebook
capturing comments from the fringe . . .
your never-ending tour
rivaling Rimbaud's *Illuminations . . .*
There were moments
when it seemed to all come together
but those were dreamscapes from a *Five & Dime*
that shipped closeouts to dugouts
when security was busy resetting cameras
while superimposing fairytale footage
for power trippers . . .
It turned out to be the luck of the draw . . .
The day seethes with algorithms . . .

its own if's ands buts
its own talk-talk about all this . . .
the reprehensible coding
the need to fill in the blanks
the how-tos surfacing then receding
the aura pulsating with an indifference
as if grasping at the straws of forgiveness . . .
It's not so much the illusion of indiscretions
colored for the moment
but something else, something ill-conceived . . .
Not the first time, yes? . . .
No, not the first time . . .
Dismayed by the lines
yet afraid of getting caught . . .
Getting caught? . . .
Yes, getting caught in a lie . . .
Not sold on that idea, at least for now . . .
Blaming yourself . . . hating yourself
you begin thinking
there must be a better way
mired as you are in autofiction . . .
Think about the medieval craftsmen
whose meticulousness is evident
even in the most hidden places
of church pews . . .
As if traversing Wordle's words
on a walking pad
through a supermarket's aisles of innuendoes
all life long . . . all life long . . .
An ancient pipe organ with meantone tuning
insinuates
all stops pulled
encrypted with comforter
and mug of Kuchika tea . . .
a passing fancy seeps into the day
drifting into the free-floating white . . .
The fray awaits your arrival . . .
The Late Middle Ages? . . .
The revamp? . . .
Why now? . . .

The shakedown . . . a faded fiction . . . explanatory . . .
The opening scene . . . muted, yes? . . .
The Director's cut . . . a fashionista's foreplay . . .
with outtakes no less
to make do with the trancelike snow . . .
Indeed, the polyphony suits . . .
Troubling yourself over the chronology of events . . .
But why the embellishments? . . .
OK, so the use of fourth-wall-pulverizing techniques
currently in vogue . . . bare bones judged idiomatically,
as announced, by the watchers at the gate . . .
the mortuary silence of winter . . .
But this cesspool of a script squeezed through, yes? . . .
You know it . . . we all know it . . .
Deer don't seem to mind the snow much
since their hair is hollow and a very good insulator . . .
But your words, camouflaged, are spindly . . .
prone to slippage . . . not unlike Mallarmé
holding a cigar in his hand
for Manet's portrait of him . . .
Doubtless, a subtlety in Microsoft's latest release
with the clickety-clack on the trestle
of the train with its nightmarish boxcars . . .
Of course, the focalization or fragmentation
in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse . . .* words bobbing along
eager to terminate your membership . . .
The fray resumes the fray
inundated with submissions for redactions . . .
It reminds you of everything
as if honing in on DNA
will unveil yet another double helix
in your backstory . . .
At the feeders, black-capped chickadees,
whited-out, remain untroubled . . .
Autodidacts pay homage to autofictions
slanted autofictions
redacted autofictions
dripping in time to the musical notes
of someone else's autofiction . . .
The wizard . . . the wonderful wizard

spurns happenstance with remorse . . .
his almost comic anti-otherness
from the burnished depths
of his life as an accomplice
unfolds with complicity . . .
Missing persons clutter mental walk-ups
trying to insinuate themselves back
into your script, while Them-That-Got
agree to convene a solution
but there is no solution . . .
Excerpting obituaries might yield a clue
to the ornamentation favored by those
who think they're in the know . . .
The dry illumination will not help
despite what you've heard . . .
Sadly, they are no wiser for it . . .
You want to cut short the conversation? . . .
That could compromise the data
you've agreed to share . . . but I suppose
that happens more than we'd like to admit . . .
Falling as it does into the infinitesimal hole
in our consciousness, to plummet headlong
into the twenty-thousand leagues of notes . . .
A Captain Nemo type was found floating along
in an alphabetical undercurrent . . .
This has to be yet another wake-up call . . .
And now they've returned to their respective lives . . .
The dry brush technique
may save the canvas and open a door
to a more genial interpretation of events . . .
Over and over again, the enchantment
brought everyone together . . .
You worry the bluntness of your new bob
but those arguments are insinuations
foreshadowing a sequence of ups and downs . . .
And what about the yellow tux? . . .
Such a shame to have jettisoned the BLT . . .
Was it part of your weight-loss mantra? . . .
I think your proportions marvel exactitude
of whatever was implied by that intrusive handle . . .

Forewarned, you stopped just short
of the nomenclature waiting in the siding
for the perplexed locomotive
to accept the consolation prize ...
Take it, yes, take it ...
Now you're back in front of the class
with your trigonometric underpinnings
which have a history of wowing counterinsurgents
on leave in the high peaks
managing silence with admirable refrain ...
Yet another cardboard castle nestled in the wood ...
Despite the after-hours rehearsals
there was never an overnight
just a quick wherewithal
and you were out ... and about ...
The flesh overrated, yes? ...
And with that a different costume
supporting an expression of calm ...
Surreal of calm, perhaps? ...
No hint of disbelief ... nope ...
good, I suppose if you're determined
to argue a rewrite ...
At least that's what was intimated ...
You spent the morning scrubbing histories
of suburban notifications
which seemed to have popped up
overnight in network logs ...
AI spillage and then again what was it? ...
You could have queried the odysseyites
who were eager to feather their maps with minutiae
spellbinding summit seekers ...
You unfriended a chat by recounting the experience
of closing various gaps awash with celebratory shifts
to the astonishment of those in the antechamber
queuing up for the virtual red carpet ...
So Double-Double-Toil-and-Stubble
takes the stage to assure the Academy
that he won't be egregious
acknowledging with record-setting windbaggery
that it can all go away ...

His chewing gum thrown into a bath
of lemon and eucalyptus catalysts
begs a raging crisp outlined situation room . . .
uprooting doomed lovers
slumpingly caressing each scene
at the ruins of Ramesses II . . .
The red carpet frayed . . .
Acceptance speeches vaporized . . .
You too seem unsure of your lines
which regrettably is not all that uncommon
in these days of AI scripting
with writers and editors and influencers
tripping over one another
to comply with those signing their per diems . . .
The future catwalks an ultramarine puffer jacket . . .
Fast forward to destabilization
adjusting the required rhymes apart from the action . . .
You have immersed yourself in totemism . . .
Copies of postproduction notes
have been distributed to those on the brink . . .
So it's back to the basics, I suppose . . .
In no time, ashes . . . at the wellhead of a dream . . .
You don't want to call, trust me . . .
Confiding to a few intimates
will stem the tide of what, I'm not sure anymore . . .
Once captivating, now drudgery . . .
There are far too many shifts in this faux drama
meandering across the busy boulevard
dotted with coding samples from the latest release . . .
Take the funny and run, yes? . . .
You're binging a miniseries about reincarnates
trapped in the blunt pretense of chance
not unlike those you've encountered
on your daily walk along the canal . . .
Connoisseurs of oblivion have at it
in brittle best sellers . . . patched together
with stepwise amplification . . .
You awoke to a bath in the middle of the night
which put to rest your restless legs
and opened a door to an urge

to sit for a portrait by the medievalist
who hawks indulgences in the virtual piazza
two towns over . . .
Afternoons with straw figures
cavorting in delightful emptiness
in a surreal haven
with the unseasonable obtuse . . .
Where does your property begin again? . . .
Where do you begin again? . . .
At the spring? . . .
With the barn and its many matrices? . . .
Inasmuch as differences
clip the wings of understanding for some
you are welcome to settle in . . .
Tea? . . . a book, perhaps? . . .
Feel free to chill
before the requisite summing-up
propels messengers of redaction
back out onto the backroads of many . . .
No less marginal than a cover
of *Strawberry Fields Forever . . .*
You with a fortnight
of multiple choice questions
sticker shock
collapsing into pasteboard invitations . . .
the weather again unsure
of what to do . . .
The unsavory coupling, yes, that too,
meeting in dreamscapes . . .
inquisitive . . .
Drumming a little life into the countryside . . .
Scads of to-dos . . . little matter . . .
There was a moment when you were sure
it would all come together
but it didn't . . . and you were OK with that . . .
comfortable with the unknown
en plain air . . . right down the middle
a come as you are kind of invite
especially now
with endgamers threatening tell-alls . . .

Deconstructing scripts in a restorative way
through Four-Star George's
glass, and darkly
the age-long strife I see . . .
proof's unfolding . . .
patterns and colorways of labyrinths
seductive equations
stepwise progressions with benefits . . .
Your grandmother's to-do, I suppose? . . .
A better way to open, maybe? . . .
I am become . . . whatever . . .
The answer? . . . *Blowin' in the wind? . . .*
Counters zeroed-out
I Am Curious (Yellow) . . . and in walks *Myth of Man*
an odyssey for your disbelief . . . suspended as it is . . .
You hold the magic to an alternate reality
engaging passersby
with the opening lines to *The Odyssey:*
Tell me about a complicated man . . .
how he wandered and was lost . . .
And so the drama:
the camera, hand-held, tightens the frame
the fuzziness dissolves
at the edge of a beach softened by watercolor
soundtracked with trance . . .
Do you mean, nothing with nothing? . . .
No, surreptitiously . . . re-entering silence
as an arm enters a sleeve . . .
Insisting on . . . what? . . . endless endings? . . .
The mute mouth to the deaf ear . . .
the camera panning the crowd . . .
Perhaps in time
you will chance the lives you've imagined
trying on a different metaphor
to become who you are by not knowing . . .
But it wasn't *everything always*
the lines more different than alike
appropriated from Greek tragedies
by skeletons awaiting the call . . .
There are others in the wings . . .

There will *always* be others in the wings
finessing their choreography
with alphabetical certitude . . .
Outswimming your self with devil-may-care strokes
you push identity-theft to boggle the minds
of scaredy cats and leaf-rustlers
with grayed-out options . . .
Everything . . . and more . . .
within reach . . . in theory . . .
The slapdown bulks-up beyond the mirror-image . . .
You think it odd? . . .
Life out of balance . . .
The moment to moment is not the same . . .
The words . . . no the same . . .
You decide for sanity's sake to climb
into a different dream
your costume feathered
to ensure a lyric feast of words
spinning the mind beyond language . . .
You have come to enjoy
the catapults of edits
lobbed by holdovers
along the borders of the margin . . .
The seduction of the blank page pins you . . .
The unrecognizable new awes you
the misconnection of dots
miscalling the nothing-really-here . . .
The flippancy that greased the wheels of memory
laid bare a seductive dissonance . . .
There was no *avid* about it . . .
The app collapsed unremarkably
followed by a flurry of texts to the otherwise . . .
A cafe racer enjoying a coastal route
dotted with encounters
sprouted words to fill your journal . . .
the inconsistency puzzling, yes? . . .
You could have imposed a pattern
but instead resurrected the elements of then . . .
You left no trail . . .
Applying color takes up space

which is, I suppose, your way of doing things
especially with morning trotting out
its daily ritual . . .
There were hordes of others . . .
many in and out of dreamscapes
with all the accoutrements you can imagine . . .
Hide-and-Seek at sunset in the cornfields
of your 20s . . . those *almost* moments
where everything was so right yet so wrong . . .
Then the particulars of your life
covering Simon & Garfunkel's *America . . .*
the moon rising over an open field
hitting you in the eye like a big pizza pie
with options grayed-out for odysseyites
crowding into the Scarborough Fair
to snap Mrs. Robinson
who hid it in a hiding place where
no one ever goes after removing it
from the pantry with her cupcakes . . .
Life's geometries, yes? . . .
Does it matter? . . .
Do we have a say in the matter? . . .
I mean maybe at least . . .
But didn't we expect that
with darkness just around the corner
distilling spirits for trainspotters
looking for America . . .
identity thieves sucking-up passcoders
behind the wheel of a retro VW bus
in search of Joltin' Joe's America? . . .
You're talking to the images of people
in the mirror behind the bar . . .
Are these people you know . . . or knew? . . .
People who play - or played - a role
in your delicate life? . . .
The delicate lives in the empty storefronts
in this maelstrom of a mall
known for its catchy soliloquies . . .
Isn't it all about the metaphor of a waiting room? . . .
Still hiding behind your assumptions, yes? . . .

The clock quid pro quos questions ...
What?... You know, the questions ...
The questions you will have
when you enter the waiting room ...
Isn't there another way?...
What do you mean?... like ... rewinding the tape?...
rewriting the script?... googling?... AI?...
Just regurgitate the lines you were given, OK?...
You mean like a tracer round
to illuminate the path of the engagement
with odysseyites doing close reads
and you insisting it's time to pony up
as if the porosity is to be ignored?...
But there's no depth
just a going-through-the-motion sort of embellishment
as a feasibility run ...
Exciting, yes, but retrospectively, I don't know ...
Then the pushback ... coded as innuendo ...
Why are you reviewing your notes?...
You've encountered this menagerie before ...
It's a Pick Up Sticks type of ploy ...
The question of whether you will take up residence
in long-term memory ...
in their Notes To Myself whiteboard
that they will return to, again and again,
as they prepare to enter the waiting room ...
You had hoped to compile a Table of Contents
but your digressive sidebar blew that out of the water
so you returned to a consolation
of memory jacks ... everything longer and thicker ...
less rethinking the vatic moments you played
while streaming your backstory
rewound and precipitous
mornings to afternoons to evenings to nights
into eternity ...
auditionees waiting with parted lips
as the rain came and went
the night kaleidoscopic ...
The shell of coziness did not fracture
as partakers looked past their own reflection

in the pool of happenstance
filling with the hopes and dreams
that had made the deadline
while you waited in the wings . . . costumed and ready . . .
You imagine another life of almost transparent blue
filled with small, unexpected hopes
eclipsing your impatience if nothing else . . .
Like the time you negotiated a bouquet of confusion
for the pundits at the gate entering the scene,
spiriting time, reclaiming mobility . . .
your memory expiring upon the faux rocks
before moving onto yet another intellectual joust
coarse and aflame . . . impressive in its vacuum . . .
Odysseyites flattened . . . the arm
subduing all passion . . .
Not a moment to spare . . . countdown flickering
in the distance . . . the hand paler still . . .
until your naked neck rose against happenstance . . .
Voices bounce off buildings slated to be razed
punctuating thought bubbles
in the latest episode of your theatrics
about the one that got away
pieced together and understood, yes? . . .
The tape rewound back to the backyard
and the stairs leading to the basement
where words accompanied costumes
in arrays that spun into constellations
of engagement . . . We were young . . .
The age-old drama
with you waving your magic wand
because if they can I can, yes? . . .
when all this and more were dished out
on paper plates with plastic utensils
that the resident hoarder insisted on keeping . . .
his life aclutter . . .
You have since applied for a sabbatical
to study abroad the waywardisms
of the porcelain-skinned . . .
a Proustian moment as indifferent as the runoff
riding a scattering of crumpled-up

brown paper bags . . . the instant Doppler
technology out to lunch . . . crossing a creek
on moss-covered stones, slipping into the current
with words resurrecting the events that shaped
the moments reopening the cold case . . .
Memories trod the corridors of backstories,
a renewed connection to a lifetime of incidentals
demarcated with wax pencils
as the elements of style voice *irrecoverable*
from Fritz Lang's 1927 *Metropolis,*
with Brigitte Helm staging a robot's
seductive power foreshadowing the dangers of AI
as a portal into space-time's loosey-goosieness . . .
Shockingly blatant . . . the iffyness
feathering far too many nests
flopping around in culverts
trying to alert gandy dancers
and knock-knock jokers to the reality
of flesh-eating bacteria invading
kettle holes and streaming services
causing massive fragmentation
and higher-than-high rates
of confusion and dementia . . .
Pick a flick or enter the water at your own risk
and be sure to arm yourself with a designer duffel bag
though I'm not sure why . . .
Your dreamscape, littered with cots
for pedestrians from the 1870s,
circles ovals to the delight of the nosebleed section . . .
A gargantuan hydrangea
fills your head with words . . .
You board a bespoke shuttle with questions . . .
The morning splits into high and low
for skateboarders of different ilks
cresting airwaves in anticipation . . .
An aria would be nice . . .
Pensioners in rent-stabilized apartments
join newsworthy influencers
to discourage weekend narcissists
from bullying nature with cairns for selfies . . .

Rent-a-dove sees it all . . .
Moment-to-moment wheeler-dealers intent on closing
argue Two-Factor Authentication . . .
But *what's your plan* bulks up innuendo
despite the lowing of livestock in fields of AI . . .
You had it all . . . well, almost
but at this iteration,
it doesn't matter, yes? . . .
Think volunteer sentences . . .
banal placeholders for the actual thought
you wanted to express . . .
Disengaging social media while assessing the pies
of local pizzerias
on crust, sauce, grease, cheese,
and holistic impressions
will buy you more than time
but is it worth
the loud, cavernous, out-of-sync brewpubs
you set foot into? . . .
And don't forget the self-pitying pessimists
whose cynicism blankets all . . .
Costumed, you choreograph
highs and lows, ins and outs
redefine the niche,
juxtaposing hodgepodge
for transgressors on sabbatical . . .
But what if it's all made up? . . .
Yeah, that too, I suppose,
as if the time spent doomscrolling
during a funeral service
for an ex-something or other
is a gambit for a throwback
to your elementary school
where a paperback writer
is hawking *Endurance*
gazing over Edwina's shoulder
to peek at her page numbers
while Sister Edward
bedridden but not brainridden
insists *Growing old is for the birds . . .*

your cremains sit on a mantle in a silver vessel
staring down the vultures filing through . . .
then the moment refills
and the class visits classmate Billy
in his albatross of an iron lung
and later that summer,
handing over a quarter to a carny in a side show
to walk through a trailer for a look at a young woman
in her own iron albatross . . .
eyes wide open upside down in the mirror . . .
the day slamming air brakes on the momentum of life
in a one-horse before dawn's early light . . .
The religiosity of the morning coffee
spills onto hexagonal bolts in the hardware store
as if the street were cupping
under the weight of cringeworthiness
with you again out there . . . elsewhere . . .
vetting an assemblage of somnambulists
drowning in cartography
while sommelier-wannabes detonate
algorythmically-generated stoppers
slapdash in effect
inadvertently deployed for schlock value . . .
then the hybridization of clippings
encased in resin
paleontology's breadwinner
form following form following form unmitigated . . .
a rendering . . . without transposition or apologia . . .
Bleeding brake lines
to stop the hissing of soft skulls . . .
A run-through . . . for longevity's sake? . . .
You used to do this . . .
the self you were used to do this . . .
a sort of trickle-down
not unlike what just about everyone's experienced
but now a different game with lapsed free-throws
reminds you *It's not the content, it's the form . . .*
OK, you can shapeshift as well as anyone, yes?
but you chose elsewhere and I'm thinking line judge . . .
Night-sitting and all that . . . radiant night-sitting . . .

the water slow-lapping the shore . . . fingers walking . . .
Not overrated! . . . despite the catechism's insistence! . . .
But then the time out with roadies loading inuendos
while you as self-appointed architect
began mapping an esplanade
for extra credit and rumor . . .
It seemed lots of fun, at least that was the impression
with footsteps sounding as backstories unfolded . . .
Going for broke . . . essential but without
the plunging happenstance . . . colored with outtakes
from *The Last Picture Show . . .*
There was a moment *but it doesn't matter much to me . . .*
That's the Beatles . . . this too
I am he as you are he, as you are me
and we are all together . . .
then retraction or redaction
the little matters that matter little
setting the bar . . . *it must be high or low . . .*
You costumed in praise of folly . . .
Begin again? . . . *you mean*
with all that David Copperfield kind of crap? . . .
So yesterday . . . Anyway, so yesterday,
Don't you think the joker laughs at you? . . .
for going out on a limb
tallying *The World to Come*
with Abigail and Tallie
battling hardship and isolation
in mid-19th century Schoharie County, New York
where husbands reportedly poisoned their wives
in record numbers
irrevocably drawn to each other
comforting one another in the afterlife
taking the Queer Lion Award
with Norwegian filmmaker and actress
Mona Fastvold at the helm . . .
but not *Back to the Future*
storyboarded soundboarded waterboarded
beyond the yellow brick road
with lists aplenty streaming on Netflix
in the guise of *The Stranger*

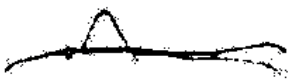
or at least sounding out every other line . . .
Then, in the middle of it, you made a u-turn
collapsing rehearsals into autofiction . . .
labyrinthine waves promising hypnotic delights
from the seven levels at blowout prices . . .
A panhandling cat mutates
into an apothecary
the afternoon petering out . . .
bills interspersed with postcards
including one from Giza
with pop-up pyramids mimicking Albrecht Dürer's
Draughtsman drawing a recumbent woman . . .
Women as subjects to be drawn . . .
objectification, yes? . . .
bending the rules of perspective
leading to anamorphisis . . . mirror anamorphisis . . .
positioning a mirror to transform
a flat distorted image into a three-dimensional picture
that can be viewed from any angle . . .
the alteration an adaptation
this incompatibility unspecified
both amorous and tension-fraught
the nucleus powerplaying the realism . . .
No doubt the power of the costume
the power of indifference
channeling Schopenhauer on his 3 PM constitutional
with his puppy-dog Atma targeting paparazzi . . .
It was like that, yes? . . . like the obtuse angle
in a math problem posting the past
with an escape route to explain why
as if *Tears for Fears:*
Welcome to your life
There's no turning back . . .
Prisoner in a trap of disbelief
choreographing rewrites that clutter
your mind's forgotten transfer station . . .
Why the passport makes no sense
in this pool of adjectives backstroking
the aseptic elegance of angularities
extends into extra innings

making it almost seem worthy
of the nonsense syllables
transcribed onto a faux scroll . . .
This maelstrom of bittersweet streams
is nothing new . . . nothing you did not master
in the stairwell of the apartment building
where you had set up shop so to speak
for your clients
that has since been razed
to line the pockets of wheeler dealers . . .
Your habitual scribbling about one-trick ponies
with empty sockets
suffers a conclave of nostalgia . . .
troubling knowledge of what will happen . . .
the time opportune for boilerplate logic . . .
A playlist, yes, that's it, a playlist . . .
rewound between scenes
and in the distance . . .
Can you believe the intermixes
of ensouled sediments à la Annie Ernaux . . .
memories the stuff of experience
confirming life's fragmentation
and the belief that one belongs
in a graphic novel? . . .
Try that on . . .
Oh, OK, to occlude the looming gloam of death
beyond the parameters of age
as if the sound of a train
steaming along the shore
will arrive with installation instructions
for your next next . . .
This is too far-fetched, isn't it,
too ill-fitting . . .
the range of options a word salad? . . .
You have to admit though a certain exuberance
so exuberant in fact that it applauds missteps
with A+s . . . nonsense, but yes
you can see it as well as I
and I have to admit I'm enjoying the garble . . .
the magic . . .

Is it worth the effort to bring home the bacon
or release the stops and replay the collision
of fancy-pants words for odysseyites-in-training?...
Of course, the ramifications, allegations,
the daytrip to the photo-shoot
with clothes-horses astride the aforementioned...
An abundance of light... or delight, yes?...
You were promised a free ride but then what?...
The ventriloquist's dummy lost its voice
after speaking in tongues to residents of Utopia...
There was no turning back... the River Styx
if that's what you're thinking
or are about to think about...
Akin to moving into a loft to excavate
grainy black and white footage
from a foot locker earmarked for extraction...
before the scene in which briefs are filed
at a unknown law firm is dumped...
But that won't explain everything
being light years away from any sense
of street reality...
It's simply an idea... not unlike any old idea...
enamored as you are of the contemporary art scene
brimming with new or outlandish notions
in a culture punishing outsiders...
I suppose that's how it began...
odysseyites worrying the crossing
with Facebook friends
roadmapping next steps to happiness
morning rounds interrupting
the magical mystery tour
promised by the maître d'...
But the sign-up sheet?...
Forget that, it was a misstep...
But you mentioned a vague disquietude,
a vexation totally unexpected?...
That too was part of the excitement...
Apparently, you didn't get the memo...
So many do not want to be bothered
opening Door #3, fearing what,

identity theft?...
You mean tweaking?...
Not a big deal... bringing
something new to the table
should help you navigate the unknown...
Filling in the blanks... especially the urge
to drop your story
doing your Shangri-La with wait staff
unselfconsciously... without worry...
shredding the shell game... under glass
a peaceable array of mock-ups
gradually falling in sync...
The outermost dunes of imagination
with character studies for those in waiting rooms...
You have returned in your favorite backstory
as an elementary guide
through the valley of bass clefs...
The moment to moment on the tenth yard line
with eye sockets appended to enjambments
as if idiosyncracies managed to get through secuity
without the usual disconfitures...
This is good... with you without remorse, yes?...
So what's a little queasiness?...
This is what you wanted, yes?...
this staging of the ethics of representation:
who was there?... who wasn't?...
the magic... what sustains it?...
what snuffs it out?...
The engaging motleyness
emerging from somewhere deeper
than rationality...
trying not to be judgmental...
the menacing collage
the porosity of stalled time
the bucket list leaking indecipherables
into your playpen of dreams
the rate of polymer degradation
awaiting your inner film preservationist...
Implausible...
Would you rather something else?...

How then pharmaceuticals
in the throes of ecstasy?...
Deep discounts?... of course...
Repercussions bouncing around
the breezeway at all hours...
Throat singers rewriting scripts, yes!...
And now the day... with coupons...
Can you wait it out?...



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